

My amendment is a part of the Daschle-Harkin bill. I thank all Senators for listening.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:46 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. INHOFE].

AGRICULTURE RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 1500

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to support the amendment offered on this side of the aisle because I think it meets all the income deficiency needs of American agriculture pretty much in the same way as the Democrat proposal does, but it also does not spend money in a lot of other areas that do not meet the immediate needs of agriculture.

I have always thought of agriculture and the needs of food production and the process of food and fiber production in America as kind of a social contract between the 2 percent of the people in the United States who earn their livelihood in farming and the rest of the 98 percent of the people, as well as a social contract of the last 60 years of some Government involvement and some Government support of agriculture, particularly in times when income was very low.

Thinking of it as a social contract, then, I do not like to believe there is a Democrat way of helping farmers or a Republican way of helping farmers. I like to think of our being able to work together on this social contract pretty much the same way we work together on Medicare and Social Security—to get agreements when there are changes made in those programs.

In those particular programs—and, thank God, for most agricultural programs—there have not been dramatic changes over the years unless there has been a bipartisan way of accomplishing those changes. So, here we are, with a Democrat proposal and a Republican proposal. People watching this throughout the country, then, have their cynicism reinforced about how Congress does not cooperate.

While this debate has not been going on just today and yesterday but over the last 2 or 3 months, there was an assumption that there would be help for agriculture under almost any circumstances; it was just a question of how to do it and exactly how much.

While this debate was going on, we have had different approaches, and it has brought us to a point where we have a Republican proposal and a Democrat proposal and we are talking past each other. I am hoping sometime before this debate gets over today and we have a final document to vote on, that we are able to get together in a Republican and Democrat way and have a bipartisan solution, at least for the essential aspects of the debate today, which is to have an infusion of income into agriculture considering that we have the lowest prices we have had in a quarter century.

I think there are two stumbling blocks to this. I think on the Democrat side the stumbling block to bipartisan cooperation is a belief among some of those Members that some of the money should find its way to the farmers through changes in the LDP programs as opposed to the transition payments. On our side, the stumbling block seems to be that we are locked into no more than \$7 billion to be spent on the agricultural program.

So I hope somewhere along the line we can get a compromise on this side and a compromise on that side of those two points of contention. Hopefully, we on this side could see the ability to go some over \$7 billion—and that the Democrats would see an opportunity to use the most efficient way of getting all the money into the farmer's pocket through the AMTA payments.

The reason for doing it that way is because we do have a crisis. The best way to respond to that crisis is through that mechanism because within 10 days after the President signs the bill, the help that we seek to give farmers can be out there, as opposed to a convoluted way of doing it through the LDP payment.

I do not know why we could not get a bipartisan compromise with each side giving to that extent—Republicans willing to spend more money and the Democrats willing to give it out in the way that most efficiently can be done.

So I see ourselves right now as two ships passing in the night, not speaking to each other. We ought to be able to get together to solve this. That is my hope. I know there are some meetings going on about that now. I'm part of some of those meetings. I hope they can be successful.

In the meantime, talking about helping the family farmer, I think it is very good to have a description of a family farm so we kind of know what we are talking about. I am going to give it the way I understand it in the Midwest, and not only in my State of Iowa.

But it seems to me there are three factors that are essential in a family farming operation: That the family makes all the management decisions; that the family provides all or most of the labor—that does not preclude the hiring of some help sometimes or maybe even a little bit of help for a long period of time; but still most of the labor being done by the family—

and, thirdly, that the capital, whether it is self-financed or whether it is borrowing from the local bank or from another generation within the family, is controlled by the family farmer—the management by the family, the labor by the family, and the capital controlled by the family.

Some people would say: Well, you have a lot of corporate farms. I do not know what percent, but we do have corporate family farms. But that is a structure they choose to do business in, especially if they have a multigenerational operation to pass on from one generation to the other and want to with a little more ease.

In addition, some people would say: Well, you have a lot of corporate agriculture. You might have a lot of corporate agriculture in America, but I do not see a lot of corporate agriculture, at least in grain farming in my State of Iowa—mainly because most corporate people who want to invest their money do not get the return on land and labor through grain production that they normally want for a return on their money. Of course, that strengthens the opportunity to family farm. But at least when I talk about the family farmer, that is the definition that I use.

In my State, the average family farm is about 340 acres. We have about 92,000 farming units in my State. By the way, if we do not get this agricultural economy turned around, we are going to have a lot less than 92,000 in a few months, as well.

Nationwide, there are about 2 million family farming operations with an average acreage of about 500 acres. So the average family farm size nationally is bigger than in my State. But remember, whether you farm 10,000 acres as a cattle farmer in Wyoming or 2,000 or 3,000 acres as a wheat farmer in Kansas or 350 as a corn, soybean, or livestock operation in my State of Iowa, it still is one job or maybe two jobs being created with all that capital investment.

Let me tell you, it takes a tremendous amount of capital—both machinery as well as land—to create one job in agriculture compared to a factory, and many times more than for a service job. So those are the family farmers I am talking about whom I want to protect.

Earlier in this debate there was some hinting about the problems of the farmers being related directly to the situation with the 1996 farm bill. I am not going to ever say that a farm bill is perfectly written and should never be looked at, but I think when you have a 7-year program, to make a judgment after 3½ years that it ought to be changed, then what was the point in having a 7-year program in the first place?

It was that we wanted to bring some certainty for the family farmer without politics meddling in their business. A 7-year program was better than a 4- or 5- or 6-year program. So we wanted to bring some certainty to agriculture.